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ABSTRACT

The 101 activities using the newspaper for teaching reading listed in this document range from such simple tasks as having children write captions for photos from the newspaper to the more advanced and complicated assignments of learning the use of propaganda devices or the five kinds of news stories. In addition, definitions for newspaper terms and skills which may be taught from the newspaper are included. (JM)

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SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHING READING THROUGH THE NEWSPAPER

1. Using photos from the paper, have children write captions in which they demonstrate the use of figures of speech.
2. Have children clip pictures of objects from various display ads and write original slogans for the objects using figures of speech.
3. Have children assume the role of salesman and attempt to use as many devices as possible to sell a product or products to the class. Poll the class to determine which appeal(s) was most successful.
4. Have children examine the language of advertising and prepare a chart of cliches, emotionally charged words, etc.
5. Have children read the sports section of the paper and collect phrases and/or words corresponding to a particular sport.
6. Have children write a news story giving an account of a literary incident.
7. List words from the newspaper that deal with concepts of time, location, size, etc.
8. Write about an incident in their lives using newspaper writing style. It could be a news or feature story.
9. Identify one syllable, two syllable, and three syllable words in the newspaper.
10. Write sequels to news or feature stories that appear in the paper.
11. Select movie titles from the entertainment section of the newspaper. Write their own story from the movie title.
12. Discuss with your children the importance of symbolic language. Have them find as many different symbols as they can.
13. Combine parts of different ads to create a totally new ad. This could be serious or humorous.
14. Determine what sentence pattern is used in ten headlines taken from the front and sports pages of the newspaper.
15. Write a news story, or feature story, demonstrating variety in sentence structure. Label each type of sentence used.

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16. Analyze the sentences within five paragraphs or a news or feature story and determine whether each sentence is simple, complex, compound or compound-complex. Note variety in sentence length. Prepare a chart contrasting sentence types and lengths in news stories, editorials, syndicated columns, and feature stories.

17. Select one picture from the newspaper which could be used as the basis for the plot of a short story, skit, or poem. Develop one of these forms of writing using the picture as the inspiration.

18. Clip a continuing news story for a fairly long period of time. Have children put the articles in their correct chronological order.

19. Select one story and list the topic sentences and supporting details within each paragraph. Set it up in outline form.

20. Select a traditional fairy tale and rewrite it as a news story, an editorial, and a feature story.

21. Find words used in the paper that would not have appeared in papers from previous decades.

22. Write an account of an accident, or similar event, from the point of view of an eye witness, the driver of the car and the policeman filing the accident report. This will illustrate various points of view.

23. Using the sports section, find as many synonyms as possible for words like win and lose.

24. Mark selected words in an article. Have children select synonyms, antonymns, or homonyms for the marked words.

25. Using a familiar story or fairy tale, list the action of the story as it is usually told. Have children rearrange these facts into the inverted style the newspaper uses.

26. Divide newspaper writing styles into three categories: news, editorials, and features. Have your students bring three good examples of each to class. Mix them up and distribute them to the class. Have each child identify the type of article he received.

27. Give children several headlines and have them infer what the story will contain.

28. Each section of the paper has its own vocabulary. Have children identify and define terms used in the different sections.

29. Have children read the lead editorial in the paper and determine the purpose for which it was written. Discuss their opinions. Was it written, for example, to inform, or advise, to praise or commend, to argue a point, to express a view, to interpret, or to eulogize?

30. Select an article that is factual and objective, and then rewrite it substituting subject and connotative language and inferences.

31. Prepare a punctuation poster. Select a portion of the newspaper and mount it on construction paper. Circle all punctuation marks and write out the rules being illustrated.

32. Compare a news story and an editorial about the same event or topic. Underline facts in blue and opinions in red; determine which contains more facts and which contains more opinions.

33. Read a review in the newspaper of a book, movie, record, concert, or television program, underlining the facts in blue and the opinions expressed in red.

34. Write a long descriptive classified advertisement. Have children rewrite the ad using as few words as possible without eliminating the necessary information.

35. Have children listen to the 6:00 and 10:00 TV news. They should take notes (or record) the news and then underline the parts of the news covered/not covered in the next morning's edition of the newspaper.

36. Have the students read the front page and write a "News-in-Brief" column summarizing each story in 1-3 sentences.

37. Discuss various propaganda devices. Have children clip examples of each device from the newspaper and display the labeled examples on a bulletin board.

38. Collect a variety of political cartoons and make a notebook. Interpret the cartoons.

39. Have children determine how word choice can influence opinion. For example, "Teachers demands were voiced." "The board proposed," etc.

40. Read and write book reviews in the style used in the newspaper.

41. Discuss with children the purpose of the editorial page. Over a period of time, have them determine the editorial position or "language" of the paper.

42. Prepare a collection of proverbs, folksy sayings, Biblical references, etc. that are used in the paper.

43. Rewrite classified or display ads so that they will appeal to different groups of people.

44. Using the overhead projector, eliminate all punctuation from an article and have children insert the correct punctuation. Discuss how changing the punctuation can change the meaning.

45. Distribute a dittoed news item containing several errors. Have children serve as proofreaders.

46. Scan the newspaper for typographical errors. The class could be divided into teams to see who finds the most.

47. Dramatize phrases or articles in the newspaper. Teams could select what the other team would dramatize.

48. Have students present oral news reports. Listening students should identify the 5 W's and H of the story.

49. Find news items corresponding to the letters of the alphabet. (A-Z of current events) Mount the stories with the appropriate letter.

50. Display the front page of the newspaper and identify the appropriate terms e.g., flag, ear, dateline, banner, etc.

51. Have children expand headlines into complete sentences and/or reduce a sentence into a headline.

52. Compare the styles of newspaper, short story, or report on a novel by using a newspaper style.

53. Select a comic strip and have children write it out without using pictures. This would require descriptions of the characters and actions, etc.

54. Give children the basic information (facts) included in a news article. Have them write their own news article of a certain length. Compare these with the original.

55. Write a classified ad based on the events of a news story. For example, Watergate suite for rent, guaranteed privacy.

56. Use the newspaper to present a TV newscast. Different children could rotate duties (broadcaster, copy writer, etc.)

57. Present children with a list of problems to be solved, and discuss how the newspaper can help solve the problems. For example, finding a job or deciding how to vote in a particular election.

58. Mount a specified number of ads of a similar nature. Have children rank the appeal of the ads according to their own needs and interests. For example: (1) Help wanted -- Which job would be your choice? Why? (2) For sale -- Which would you buy? Why? (3) Lost & Found -- Which item is most valuable? Why?

59. Read and compare a liberal and conservative columnists' views on a particular issue.

60. Read and compare two or more letters to the editor on a single issue. Discuss the differences in views expressed and the persuasiveness of the letters.

61. Compare the headlines of two or more papers on the same subject. Discuss the reasons why the headlines differ.

62. Compare the placement of news articles in two or more papers. Discuss the possible reasons why the placement is the same or different.

63. Present children with an article with appropriate words deleted and have them fill in deletions by using context clues.

64. Clip news stories and headlines. Separate them and have students match the articles and the proper headlines. The same thing may be done with pictures and captions.

65. Divide the class into teams. Have each team find several words used in the paper. Taking turns, test each team's ability to define each word.

66. Have students cut out the letters of the alphabet from the paper in different sizes and styles of type. Mount in a notebook or on a bulletin board.

67. Write the letters of the alphabet on the blackboard. Using grocery ads, have students go shopping, and find an item that begins with each letter. Can cut these out and paste each item under the appropriate letter on a sheet of newsprint. They could also determine how much their shopping cost them.

68. Find ten action verbs in the sports section and write a sentence using each of them--not in sports language.

69. Give students various objects. Have them compose an advertisement for the object as it might appear in the paper.

70. Collect pictures of people doing jobs listed in the want ads.

71. Remove the last paragraph from newspaper articles. Have students try to determine what happened next. Let them develop an appropriate ending to the story.

72. Define words in the paper that are unfamiliar. Keep a vocabulary notebook. It could be organized by sections of the paper.

73. Collect words of categories (for example, size, color, emotions, etc.). Each word could be used in a sentence or story.

74. Give students headlines and have them make up stories to go with the headlines. The procedure can be reversed.

75. Discuss why letters are sent to the editors, including the correct way to write a letter. Have students write their own letter on a topic of interest or concern to them.

76. Discuss the sports and modern living pages. Students can work in groups and create their own articles related to these two sections. Initially, boys can work on sports and girls on modern living and then they can switch roles.

77. Discuss newspaper headlines. Have students make up headlines for nursery rhymes or fairy stories. Students can guess which story the headline is about.

The above activities were all taken from The Newspaper in the Curriculum, pp. 39-41. (See bibliography.) In addition to these, more are given for language arts and reading, for social studies, math, science, music, art, and consumer education, business, home economics.

Some additional ideas:

78. Check the birth announcements in the paper over a period of two weeks. Construct a chart of the number of boys and girls born. The same could be done with deaths.

79. Take an article and have children circle all the letters of the alphabet in order as they appear throughout the article. See who finishes first, or how many letters can be found in a given time limit. All children must be working from the same article.

80. Using the index or table of contents on the front page of the paper, discuss how to tell where one might find various things. Name a topic such as "New All-Glass Furniture" and see if children can decide what section it would be in. Use many examples to touch on all parts of a paper. This teaches categorizing and attribute skills.

81. What's in a headline? In most cases can find at least some of the 5 W's and H. They are usually written in present tense, but not always. Why are headlines used?

82. Discuss the dateline and authorship of several articles, pointing out how to tell and why these bits of information are important.

83. Examine various pictures in the newspaper. What kinds of articles have them? What kind of information is given below the picture? Why are pictures used?

84. Find examples of the following styles of writing: factual writing, human interest story, editorial, society activities, obituaries, classified ads, fillers, weather, stocks, etc. Discuss the characteristics of each kind, how to recognize what it is, and how to interpret the information given.

85. Using maps in the paper, discuss where each map is viewed from; what kind of map it is; what can be interpreted from it; what symbols and abbreviations must be understood in order to read it. Note what information is given in the map that is not also given in the text accompanying it.

86. Collect examples of abbreviations and/or symbols used throughout the paper. Identify each one, writing out its meaning in words. These can be found in all types of writing. Discuss what an abbreviation is; why they are used; why they must be standardized.

87. Examine political cartoons. What does one need to know beyond the actual cartoon to really understand its point? Have the child try to explain what is happening in the cartoon (literal comprehension--just telling what he sees). Then explain what it means (inferential comprehension--reading information implied and not directly given). Does he agree or disagree, and why (critical comprehension--judgment, evaluation, application to own life). Be sure he knows what type of thinking he is using at each step, and that just because he believes something does not make it so.

88. Using a graph in the paper, discuss its meaning. Compare the information given in the printed article accompanying it. Is the same information given in both? If not, how do the two types of information relate? Have the child write out in words the information given in the graph, as an introductory paragraph to the article. Then discuss why graphs are used (express same information in more concise, visual form).

89. Discuss what kinds of topics get coverage on an editorial page.

90. Use prices in the advertisements for practice in addition, and subtraction; making change; comparing cost of various sizes; meaning of fractions, % signs.

91. Look at misleading statements in advertisements about price, i.e., "99¢ off regular price $6.25" or "cardtable and chairs - each $5.50."

92. If an ad says the price is a given amount "plus state/federal taxes", discuss what this means, and how these taxes are figured.

93. Note coupons. Why are they given? (to get the customer in the store so he will see other things he wants to buy also) Also, they should compare the coupon price with the regular price in other stores; it may not be significantly less.

94. Using the horoscope, relate the dates and names to science, and the placement of the constellations in relation to the sun at given times during the year. Relate the sign names to myths; learn stories of each. Discuss reliability of predictions and why. This may bring out children's personal values and beliefs. These should be evaluated, and contrasted to facts.

95. Crossword puzzles can be used effectively to build vocabulary, and use of the dictionary and thesaurus.

96. Recipes can be used to teach the meaning of fractions, the importance of following directions step by step, and the meaning of various words as used in this context.

97. Sports page--see who can find the score of a given team first, or some other bit of information designated by the teacher. This requires the use of scanning.

98. Use the classified ads section to work on categories. Give an example of something to be found/learned in the ads, and see if children can locate that section where it would be found.

99. Discuss how classified ads are written. (most important ideas in least number of words) Which words (what kind of) are omitted? Does this affect the meaning? If not, why are those kinds of words used in other styles of writing? Discuss some examples of ads in which the meaning is vague because of poor wording. Note the syntax of the sentence is not changed even though some words are omitted. Note abbreviations used, and find as many different ones as possible. Discuss meanings. Find out about the cost of ads of various kinds.

100. Teach the use of the following propaganda devices:

a. Name Calling--
Using labels instead of discussing the facts. Consists primarily of attaching a negative symbol to someone or something. For example, calling a politician a "crook" or a person whose ideas are unpopular a fascist or a hawk or a dove. By branding a person with these negative symbols, it is often possible to avoid citing facts. Names, rather than facts, can be used to get a desired reaction from the reader.

b. Glittering Generalities--
Vague phrases that promise much. Usually consists of associating positive symbols, slogans, and unsupported generalizations with an idea or person. For example, saying during a political campaign that "this act will benefit all Americans and will enhance our position abroad." But only a careful weighing of the facts will determine whether or not such a glittering generality has much truth in it. Another example: "All smart students use Bic pens."

c. Transfer--
Applying a set of symbols to a purpose for which they were not intended. Consists primarily of transferring the attraction of strong positive symbols or the repulsion of strong negative symbols to some person, group, or idea. For example, a subversive group might display the American flag and pictures of Washington and Lincoln at its meetings. These positive symbols help conceal the basic purposes of the group and help gain public support. Only careful thinking on your part can determine whether such uses of these symbols are supported by the facts.

d. Testimonial--
Getting some prominent person to endorse the idea or product. The endorsement of some prominent person or group is often used to elicit a favorable reaction from the reader. Motion picture stars and outstanding athletes are often used for this purpose. More than likely, however, the person has no qualifications to make him an authority on that product. For example, Art Linkletter advertises Milton Bradley toys. Discuss his background and accomplishments, and note the little authority he has for such an advertisement.

e. Plain Folks--
Pretending to be "one of the folks." People are sometimes convinced of the worth of a candidate for office because he takes a "folksy" approach to problems. He uses simple idiomatic English and repeats old proverbs. Sometimes this approach includes kissing babies, wearing Indian feathers, or posing with a fishing rod in hand. Such things prove little, if anything, about the qualifications of the candidate. In advertising, some examples might be the personal letters written by people for No-Nonsense panty hose, the farmer recommending certain feed for hogs, or the housewife doing a million things to push the sale of various household products.

f. Bandwagon--
Claiming that "everyone is doing it." Effective because many people don't make up their own minds and instead follow the lead of the majority. Consists of giving the impression that everyone is doing it or voting this way, or buying this product, and so you'd better get on the bandwagon if you want to keep up with the crowd. It is an appeal to your desire to conform.

g. Cardstacking--
Presenting only the parts of the facts that favor one side. Consists of presenting only one side of a situation or using only part of the facts. Using a quotation out of context, omitting key words, or using favorable statistics and suppressing unfavorable ones. It is important to keep in mind that a series of half-truths usually add up to a complete lie.

101. Teach the five kinds of news stories:
a. Factual--
A report based strictly on facts. Tells only what actually took place. Most common news story. The reporter writes only what he sees and hears, without injecting personal opinion or judgment.

b. Interpretative--
Also known as reporting in depth. Explains the significance of a current event, its historical background, how it compares with a similar situation in another locality and possibly how it may affect the future.

c. Speculative--
Reviews possibilities of a situation, detailing what has happened, what could take place, and what effects it could have.

d. Promotional--
Material prepared with the objective of inducing the reader to support or endorse a specific project or product. Examples--articles urging purchase of apples to aid the Boy Scout movement, or donating money to the United Fund. Reputable newspapers publish this type of material only when it is designed to further the cause of some obviously worthy public service without commercial connections.

e. Propaganda--
This type of so-called news is sometimes issued by governments, political parties, organizations or individuals to further their own ends, basically to create an impression favorable to the issuer, although the information may possibly be false. This is seldom treated as factual news. But the fact that it has been issued may be news; the identity of the issuer may be news. The reply to it by the other side may make a balanced story that is news.

Some newspaper terminology that might be useful:

Agate line -- a standard unit for measurement of advertising space one column wide and one-fourteenth of an inch deep.

AP -- Abbreviation for The Associated Press.

Banner -- A headline in large letters running across the entire width of the first page.

Bodytype -- Type used in the story, not in the headline.

Bold face -- Applied to type, meaning heavy type.

Byline -- Name of newspaper writer, appearing above news or feature story.

Column inch -- A unit of measure one inch deep and one column wide.

Copy -- All manuscript or printed matter prepared for printing.

Copyreader -- A newspaper worker who corrects or edits copy written by reporters; he may also write the headline for it.

CP -- Abbreviation for The Canadian Press.

Cub -- A beginning, inexperienced reporter.

Cutlines -- The copy (usually only a few lines) which accompanies and gives necessary information about a picture.

Date line -- The line at the beginning of a story giving the place and date of the reported event.

Display type -- The larger than regular body type used for headlines or whatever an attention-getting is necessary.

Dummy -- A diagram or layout of a newspaper page, showing the placement of stories, headlines and pictures.

Ear -- Space at top of front page on each side of paper's name. Used for weather news, index, circulation figures or to call attention to some special feature in the newspaper.

Feature story -- A story in which the interest lies in some factor other than the news value.

Filler -- A story with little news value, used to fill space.

Lead -- The first few sentences or opening paragraphs of a news story; the lead contains summaries or introduces the story.

Lineage -- The total number of lines of space in an advertisement or an issue computed in agate lines, of which there are 14 to a column inch.

Linotype -- An early typesetting machine that casts solid lines of type from molten metal; it is operated through a keyboard, similar to that on a typewriter.

Make-up -- The arrangement of stories, headlines, and pictures into columns and pages in preparation for printing.

Masthead -- The detail printed in every issue of a newspaper or journal, including the title, ownership, management as well as subscription and advertising rates.

Morgue -- Files of stories, biographies, cuts, etc. available for reference at any time; the place where these materials are kept; a newspaper's morgue is now usually referred to as its library.

Proof -- A page on which newly set type, pictures or illustrations are reproduced to make possible the early correction of errors.

Proofreader -- One who reads proof pages or sheets and marks errors.

Release -- To specify the publication of a story on or after a specific day or hour.

Subhead -- Headings used in body of story to break the monotony of a solid column.

UPI -- Abbreviation for The United Press International

Skills which may be taught from the newspaper:

Alphabetizing	Writing	Details
Pronunciation	Spelling	Graphs/Tables
Syllabication	Propaganda	Key Words
Word Meanings	Evaluating	Metaphors
Outlining	Chronological order	Synonyms
Main Ideas	Sequencing	Paraphrasing
Composing Titles	Ordering	Scanning
Selecting Answers	Generalizing	Values & Comprehensi
Notetaking	Concluding	Styles of writing
Classifying	Relating--Past/Present	Emotion-laden Words
Arranging	Time Relationships	Following Directions
Summarizing	Vocabulary	Index
Table of Contents	Capitalization	Abbreviations
Fact--Opinion	Translation	Symbols
Fact--Fiction	Interpreting	Cartoon Communicatio
Comparing	Map Reading	Context Clues
Contrasting	Hypothesizing	Punctuation
Computation	Collecting	Hyphenation
Skimming	Analyzing	Proofreading
Relevant/Irrelevant	Problem Solving	Sentence Patterns

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